

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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P R 090739Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

AMCONSUL UDORN

SECSTATE WASHDC 6997

UNCLAS BANGKOK 33353

USIAC

FOR IEA AND ICS/D, CINCPAC FOR USIA ADVISOR, CHIANG MAI

AND UDORN FOR BRANCH PAO, STATE FOR CU/EA

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS--DECEMBER 3-9, 1976

MEDIA DEVELOPMENTS

1. MEDIA-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS: INTERIOR MINISTER SMAK

SUNDARAVEJ WARNED THE PRESS TO ABIDE BY RULES OF CONDUCT AGREED TO BY NEWSPAPERS REOPENING AFTER OCTOBER 6 COUP. SAMAK CHARGED THAT MANY PAPERS WERE CRITICIZING THE GOVERNMENT, THUS BREAKING RULES AND CHALLENGING THE GOVERNMENT TO CLOSE THEM DOWN. THE WARNING WAS APPARENTLY TRIGGERED BY THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BANGKOK POST'S REPORTS, DENIED BY SAMAK, THAT THAILAND WILL ALLOW MALAYSIAN PARATROOPPERS TO RETURN TO SOUTHERN THAILAND TO HELP SUPPRESS COMMUNISTS IN BETONG AND THAT THAILAND IS PROPOSING A MILITARY PACT FOR ASEAN. (IN A RECENT INTERVIEW, THE PRIME MINISTER REFERRED VAGUELY TO MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH ASEAN NATIONS BUT OUTSIDE THE ASEAN FRAMEWORK.)

2. NEW ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILY FOR BANGKOK: BANGKOK'S FOURTH ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PAPER, THE MORNING EXPRESS, OPENED THIS WEEK. WITH A CLAIMED BUT DOUBTFUL INITIAL PRESS RUN OF 8,000, THE EXPRESS WILL FOCUS

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MORE ON THAI EVENTS AND CULTURE, THUS BECOMING A PRINCIPAL COMPETITOR

OF THE NATION. EDITOR USUM NIMMANHEMINDA, SON OF A FORMER THAI AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, COMES FROM A PROMINENT CHIANG MAI BANKING FAMILY. THE EXPRESS' EDITORIAL POLICY IS CONSERVATIVE.

3. VANCE DESIGNATION GREETED WITH CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM: SCATTERED COMMENT ON THE DESIGNATION OF CYRUS VANCE TO BE SECRETARY OF STATE CENTERED ON POSSIBLE FURTHER NORMALIZATION OF U.S. -PRC RELATIONS. SOME OBSERVERS NOTED VANCE'S EXPERIENCE AND REPUTATION FOR A JUDICIOUS APPROACH TO PROBLEMS, BUT PRO-TAIWAN CHINESE-LANGUAGE SHIH CHIEH JIT PAO ASSERTED THAT "IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THE DIGNITY AND OBLIGATION OF THE TREATIES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES IF THE U.S. WANTS TO REINJECT 'MORALITY' INTO FOREIGN POLICY."

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

1. VTR SERIES COMPLETE: POST FILMED THAT FINAL SEGMENT OF THE 52--PROGRAM, THIRTY-MINUTE COLOR SERIRES TUNE INTO ENGLISH. FOR SOME MONTHS THE SERIES HAS BEEN A WEEKLY FEATURE ON BANGKOK TELEVISION WHILE RECEIVING HEAVY USE BY BNC VIDEOTAPE BORROWERS.

2. POST CELEBRATES PUBLICATION EVENT: THE CPAO HOSTED A DECEMBER 8 RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE PUBLICATION OF USIS-CONCEIVED THAI-U.S. RELATIONS: 1833-1950." NUMBER 25 IN THE THAI-LANGUAGE "NAWATAS" SERIES. DISTINGUISHED AUTHORS CONTRBUTING HISTORICA ESSAYS TO THE VOLUME INCLUDE WAR-TIME AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER SENI PRAMOJ. THE PUBLICATION PARTY WAS ATTENDED BY 150 INCLUDING THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF SEATO, UNIVERSITY RECOTRS AND VICE RECOTRS AND HIGH-RANKING MINISTERIAL OFFICIALS.
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